CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY P Schmelzer DATE 2/26/87
EXCEPTIONS, IF ANY:
TS AUTH REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

437

What options exist for Saudi participation in continuing USAF AWACS deployments in Saudi Arabia? How would each affect Saudi ability to operate and maintain USAF AWACS?

Saudi personnel currently participate to a limited extent in AWACS flight operations and they receive selected data from AWACS via data link. This arrangement provides the Saudis with familiarization of AWACS operations. It can be viewed as a baseline against which options for expanding Saudi participation can be measured.

Although some expanded Saudi participation in US AWACS operations is possible, the AWACS personnel and equipment now deployed to Saudi Arabia have an operational mission. They have few resources for conducting training. A full scale training program, in fact, will require several hundred technicians as well as specialized equipment including a full-scale AWACS simulator.

This said, there are intermediate measures which could be taken to increase Saudi participation. Saudis could, for instance, man a larger number of consoles aboard AWACS. They could also participate in mission planning. If a sufficient number of technically qualified Saudi personnel were available, a cadre of Saudi AWACS maintenance specialists could be trained by phasing in their participation in US AWACS maintenance activities. Over the three year period preceding the start of formal AWACS Saudi training, these measures could significantly accelerate Saudi proficiency in AWACS operations and maintenance. No amount of additional training, however, could feasibly eliminate the need for indefinite contractor support of AWACS.